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II. A GLIMPSE OF VILLAGE LIFE

(a) COURTYARD SCENE IN MARCH

(b) STAMPING MEALIES

[facing p. 17]

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fear of preying animals or raiding enemies. Old Raselaka complains that herdboys of to-day no longer tend cattle as they should. Cattle used to be taken to graze just after sunrise, at least when there was no summer dew, for the early dew in summer, though not in winter, is dangerous to man and beast. They were brought home to be milked at about 11 o'clock, when the boys would eat their breakfast, and were driven out again till sunset. To-day the boys like having their breakfast first, and it is not unusual in some areas to find cattle still in their kraals at midday, especially where the herdboys are attending school, a practice that seriously decreases their grazing time. Not one of the ten head of cattle in Raselaka's village is in milk. In fact, the cattle in Loveduland give hardly any milk at all, owing largely to over-population (over 75 per cent. of the land is under cultivation and certain areas are under forest) but also because of the poor quality of the cattle. But milk has never played an important part in Lovedu diet and many people find it nauseating.

You are eager to be shown the lay-out of the village and to watch some of the activities. As you pass through a gateway leading from the *khoro* to the huts, you hear Raselaka giving orders to the boys that a fowl is to be caught and killed for the visitors. The huts stand in two curved rows facing one another, sixteen in all. In a large old-style village like the royal kraal, they would surround the *khoro*, but here there are too few for that. A complete circle of huts still haunts the dreams of the ambitious doyen of a district. To one side of the line of huts is a tobacco garden, while at the back is the *murula*, or storage enclosure, made of branches with a gate that can be closed against wandering goats. Here stand the large receptacles made of wood interwoven with grass in which mealies are stored after reaping, till dry enough for decobbing. But they are empty now and some are in need of repair. To one side stands a roughly made, unplastered hut full of beer-pots. Here beer is left to ferment and sometimes also served. A number of large green and yellow pumpkins, the sweet kind cultivated by Natives, have been placed beside the beer-pots, while a heap of golden, plumlike *murula* fruits with a cloud of midges above it testifies to the desire of some woman to make a little cider at home. But it is seldom that such cider is made at home; the place for it is in the open under the shade of the trees.

As you look along the space between the two rows of huts, a pleasant and busy scene meets the eyes. It is ten o'clock and cooking operations are at their height. Some are cooking outside in the courtyard; others prefer to cook in the kitchen hut. An old woman is spreading out her newly lifted monkey nuts, together with a few cobs of mealies which had fallen to the ground, to be sun-dried in her courtyard. Some freshly stamped mealie meal on mats and in baskets is also set out in the sun. On an old piece of corrugated iron are lumps of a dark green substance. This is relish, cooked pumpkin and bean leaves, being dried and preserved for use in winter, when greens are hard to obtain. Apparently too much had been cooked for the corrugated iron, so the residue has been plastered on to the thatch of a hut. Roofs are useful also for other purposes; on one is a newly washed salampore cloth spread out to dry.

Each pair of opposing huts forms a separate household, its courtyard,

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cold in winter. The veranda of the sleeping hut is used for storage. Here are pots of all sizes, many with lids glued down with dung, calabashes, sacks of corn on stands, medicinal roots, perhaps an old plough, a small grain basket on an inverted tripod of sticks, and a bag of reed pipes for dancing.

The contrast between sleeping and cooking huts is marked: whereas the former is relatively empty, cool and clean, the kitchen hut is generally rather untidy and, when a fire is burning, full of smoke. This is the domain of the housewife. Here are her cooking utensils—pots, baskets, wooden dishes, dishes of white enamel. At first the smoke deters you from entering, but the woman and her children sitting there appear to be quite at ease, so you summon up courage and go in. You splutter at first and your eyes water, but soon you grow accustomed to the atmosphere. You glance up at the unplastered roof and find it black from the smoke of many years. It is the home of countless cockroaches. Stuck in it are ears of corn and mealie cobs kept for seed, and many other articles, such as a cupping horn, some medicinal roots, some old arrows, and axe and spear of Sotho-worked iron kept as religious objects. On a platform of wood, out of the reach of white termites, are several bags of nuts and mealies, while a handbroom of asparagus fern lying near the hearth in the centre comes in useful from time to time for sweeping all the dirt into the fireplace. In this hut women sit at night; grandmothers sleep here with the children; here children are born and here they are often fed; here people lie when ill and here too they die.

A chair, native-made but after the European fashion, with seat of stripe of thong, has been placed for you in a shady spot in the chief wife's court-yard. To be perched so high above ground when every one else sits on the floor is distinctly uncomfortable and out of place, but, in deference to the hospitality of your host in according you the honour of a chair, you feel you must occupy it. Four or five small, pot-bellied urchins with dirty noses range themselves near you to watch more closely the features and clothes of the European. One softly points out your peculiar nose to a companion, another comments on your shoes; altogether they find you and your ways absorbing. One small child holds aloof, screaming with fear when the rest try to force him to come near. With her back to the sun, a woman kneels beside a large pot of boiling water, deftly twirling a wooden twirler between her palms. Every now and then she stops to add a little of the fine, white mealie meal beside her by means of a ladle of calabash, for this is the first stage in the making of *sweme*, cakes of thick meal, their staple food. The twirling prevents the formation of lumps. When the mixture becomes too thick for the twirler, a large, flat, wooden spoon is used with both hands. An aged and wrinkled old woman, mother-in-law of the one who is cooking, arrives from her garden with a basket on her head filled with the young leaves and male flowers of the pumpkin and three or four fresh cobs of mealies. The leaves and flowers are for relish for the meal; the cobs of maize she roasts in the fire for her grandchildren. She sits down, feet straight before her, and begins slowly to pull off the rough outer covering from the stalk of each leaf; it is then broken into two or three pieces and placed in a small, wide-mouthed pot.

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Cooking the morning meal is a long-drawn-out process, requiring from two to three hours, for not only does water take a long time to boil in those earthen pots over a slow fire, but everything is done in a leisurely manner. While the meal is being cooked, the children and the women themselves roast mealies or monkey nuts, or sit about the courtyard eating sugar cane, for it is summer, the time when there is plenty. The old woman is now roasting some shelled monkey nuts on a potsherd; these she will stamp fine and add to the relish to give it additional flavouring.

A comely girl of about fourteen enters with a large gourd of water on her head, which a friend helps her to put down. '*Mukhadi uee*,' calls out her mother. '*Malowya*,' says the girl, a polite reply or formal answering phrase by which you know at once that she belongs to the royal group, for each group has its own distinguishing answering praise-title. 'Get ready the platters. I shall be dishing up soon.' Mukhadi goes into the huts and collects five dishes—three gourds and two wooden plates—in which are the remains of the previous meal. The remains are carefully set aside to be used for making light beer (*mahwala*), for food is never wasted; then the dishes are scoured by means of powdered sandstone and stood in a row in the sun to dry.

In a neighbouring courtyard a grandmother begins feeding a two-months-old baby with thick gruel of sprouted corn. She begins by washing its face, then, cupping her left hand filled with gruel before its mouth, she pushes in the food with a finger of the right hand. Splutterings and gurglings are of no avail till Granny has decided it has had enough. This novel procedure is followed from the day of birth as a supplement to mother's milk. After its meal comes its daily bath. The baby is held over a large potsherd of warm water and washed with a little soap, special care being taken to clean the head and eyes. The baby wriggles and cries; the sherd has jagged edges; the European onlooker fears that at any moment the child may slip out of the woman's hands; but she is skilled and experienced in the handling of infants, and nothing untoward occurs. After being air-dried, the baby's body is anointed with vaseline, an easy substitute for the butter fat of old. In the meantime two boys arrive, one with a large cock under his arm. They are sorry to have taken so long, but, when they looked for a fowl, only the fowls of their neighbours could be seen; their own were nowhere to be found. Your hostess is about to have it killed, but you decide you would prefer to taste native relish, so you give instructions that it is to be left on the hut veranda with legs tied together.

The woman of the *muhe* has lifted her pot off the fire and is beginning to dish up. Smoothing down the porridge with her wooden spoon, she skilfully scoops out a spoonful, which she carefully lays on one of the platters. The result is a neat cake of porridge over which a smooth, outer skin very rapidly forms. A cake is placed in each of the dishes before a second is added, till there are four or five on each. A Lovedu housewife is very particular about the manner in which she dishes up food, for untidy-looking cakes with jagged edges give one the reputation of slovenliness. The Lovedu pride themselves on their cleanliness with food; porridge must be white, with no suspicion of a foreign object. When a

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woman has finished dishing up, she very often wipes out the pot with her fingers before setting it aside, for utensils are washed just before they are needed—not after use. To prepare the relish a little water is placed in a wide-mouthed cooking dish, the pumpkin leaves and flowers are added and then put on the fire. Within a few minutes the spinach is sufficiently cooked. A handful of salt is put in, the ground monkey nuts are added, the mixture stirred once or twice, when it is ready to be dished up into small black earthen basins.

Serving food to guests is a ceremonious affair. The sleeping or reception hut is carefully swept out; the food is placed in it, often before the dust has properly settled, a mat is unrolled and the guests are called to eat. To your surprise, you discover that the host does not dine with honoured guests. A wooden dish of food has been placed in a double basket with a lid. Beside it stands the relish. Mukhadi approaches on her knees with a white enamel basin of water for the guests to wash their hands, then crawls away again, leaving the water to be used again after the meal. Before beginning to eat, the youngest of the visitors claps his hands saying, '*Ndau.*' The rest reply, '*Morena,*' and the meal is begun. Each one, using his fingers, breaks a piece of a mealie meal cake, dips it in the dish of relish and eats it. There is no salt in the porridge, to make up for which the relish is very salt indeed. All eat from one bowl but there is nothing unhygienic in this. When finished you again wash your hands. Light beer, if there is any, may round off the meal.

There is no communal meal and no proper mealtime. Each wife places food for the husband in the reception hut of his chief wife and here he comes to eat any time he wishes. Later the remains will be fetched back to the hut whence it came. Food is not sent from one hut to another, except when special luxury dishes are made, known in general as *madaaga* and usually prepared outside of cooking hours. These are always shared. The younger children sit down to eat with the mother in the courtyard, but the herdboys, in a hurry to take out the cattle, seize several cakes, place some relish on them, and walk off. Metiane, aged four, does not want vegetable relish. He has seen meat prepared in the courtyard of his friend Nagambi and so he refuses spinach. When his mother tries to coax him, he merely sets up a dismal howl; but he is neither severely scolded nor beaten as a European child in such a situation might be. Instead they try to pacify him, till at last the mother of Nagambi, seeing the fuss, brings him a small piece of meat, telling him to be quiet.

The cooking done, a general migration takes place, and the village, a hive of industry in the morning, becomes almost if not quite deserted. During the agricultural season one seldom finds people at home in the afternoons. They are all out in the fields. One woman, securing the reed door of her kitchen by means of a wooden stamper balanced against it on the outside, takes a hoe and is off to mound her *nyugo* beans. Another is still busy with her weeding. A third, taking a calabash of food with her, goes to join her daughter, who left shortly after sunrise, to make *mavula* cider under the trees in their field. It is a process involving considerable labour. Mamadomi is not going to the fields to-day. She wants to smear a fresh coating of dung over her courtyard and to go on with a basket she

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has begun making. Her small daughter under puberty has, however, to fetch the dung, as their cattle kraal has not been doctored to make it safe for women to enter without harming the cattle. The old mother of the village head sits basking in the sun in the courtyard, guarding the drying nuts and mealies from the fowls that wander freely about the huts now that the people are away. She wields a long stick and every time a fowl approaches whacks at it to chase it off.

The only sound that can now be heard in the village is the thud of three stampers. A woman and two girls are finishing off their stamping begun two hours before. They pound with long, wooden stampers into large, hour-glass-shaped blocks of wood with brisk up-and-down movements from the waist. It is hard work requiring a fair amount of skill. The first stage in stamping is the *ku thuvula* process; hard mealie grains are placed in the stamping block, a little water added, and stamping begins. When the outer husks are loose the grains are placed in a flat winnowing basket, where, with an up-and-down movement, the husks are separated out and allowed to fall on the ground. These will later on be used for feeding pigs. The de-husked grains are put back into the block to be further pounded. After a time this is winnowed again in the basket, the lighter husks being made to fall on top of the rough husks of the first winnowing. The husks of the second winnowing are used for making light beer (*mahudu*) and could in time of scarcity be used for porridge. After being stamped a third time, the maize is generally winnowed into a basket, for the third winnowings are used to make *swithithi*, a coarsish porridge darker in colour than *swume*. What is now left of the mealie grains looks like rather rounded grains of very white rice. This ends the first stage in stamping. Boiling water is poured over these grains, which are soaked for about two hours, then taken out and placed on a roughly made or old winnowing basket to allow the water to drain off. At dawn next morning the second main process (*ku sefa*)—stamping into fine meal—takes place. The result is a very fine, snowy white flour very much like maizena, the pride of the Lovedu housewife. To supply the needs of an ordinary household, it is necessary to stamp two or three times a week, a process involving from four and a half to six hours of work each time. Kaffir corn and millet is subjected to one stamping in the wooden block to get rid of the husks, then ground fine on a flat grindstone. But porridge of kaffir corn or millet is very seldom eaten, most of it being used for beer.

Two boys come home from school and forage in the kitchen hut for their food, as their mothers have gone to the fields; of the twenty-five children in the village, they are the only ones who go to school. The midday heat is intense; the quiet air quivers under the sun's fierce rays. Some small girls sitting under a nearby tree outside the village seize hold of an empty paraffin tin and begin to sing and dance. Two of them are looking after babies, which they have strapped to their backs, but this in no way disturbs their enjoyment. Later on they will set out with old empty jam tins of various sizes to collect grasshoppers, which they catch by beating them with branches. In winter they are sent to collect wild relish for their mochilbs or to catch *mahoru* (*Macrotermes bellicositermes Sussiae*), which they entice out of their holes by means of a long piece

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4-82 of pumpkins and green mealies for the evening meal. One woman, carrying a bundle of sugar-cane, is being tormented by two men who, despite her obvious unwillingness to give them any of it, are helping
[262 themselves; for people are thought to have a sort of right to picked sugar-
576] cane, which is not a food, but like sweets among ourselves, something pleasing to the palate, to be shared with others. Last of all, and panting heavily, come the young girls who went to fetch wood, each with a heavy load on the head.

●252 In the village some of the fires are already lit. One woman is cooking pumpkins for the evening meal. She cuts them into convenient pieces, removes the pips but not the outer skin, then packs them one above the other in a large pot, at the bottom of which there is a little water. A second pot, wide-mouthed and shallow, is inverted over the top, smeared down with a little of the red substance covering the seeds, and the whole allowed to steam over the fire. Green mealies for the evening meal are
[263] cooked in the same manner. Though pumpkin and mealies cooked in this way are very pleasant to eat, the European misses the salt, which is never added. Another woman is preparing some relish to eat with porridge from the morning. It grows darker and darker. The fires, some in the courtyard, some in the huts, but each the centre of a little family group, become a deeper crimson, their cheerful flickering giving one a sense of homeliness and quiet joy. At the courtyard fire where you are sitting, a small girl is cooking her tin of 'food', consisting of five treasured grasshoppers mixed with tomato, which she found growing in the kraal hedge. Every now and then she stirs this brew with a stick. The others are roasting mealies and nuts. A herdboy comes in and lays down beside
431 his grandmother a bird he has killed. She is pleased with the gift, thanks
603 him warmly and praises him by the praise of his name, 'You have done
551 well, Dwagu, you who eat birds and take the heads to give your playmates' (*'U shumile Dwagu wa hu la dinonyana a jia dikoko a fa vaimana'*). If his name had been Boga, the praise would have run, 'Boga, it falls upon people, that thick bush of Mujaji of Muhale' (*Boga li wela vathu lenzi la Mujaji a Muhale*); for almost every Lovedu name has its praise, whoever might bear it. Boys are always told by their grandmothers to bring them birds; this they like doing, for there are so many ways in which grandmothers can return the gesture—boiled njugo beans, monkey nuts, or sugar-cane being always welcome.

571 In the *khovi*, the three men of the village are sitting by their
521 fire; the herdboys sit at another. The boys are listening to a spirited account of the ways of European farmers given by a boy of fourteen whose good clothes and white sandshoes testify to his having just returned from work. A boy, who has just been called to supper, comes back with a cake of porridge and some relish in his hands to eat it in male company in the *khovi*. Another goes home to eat, but returns later on. The conversation has veered round to the hunting of cane rats with wooden traps, the prevalent sport of this time of the year, when one of the boys comes with some monkey nuts which he has begged from an old woman. These are roasted in their shells in the fire and eaten by the company. Another has managed to obtain some mealies
[c. Prop?

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513 By eight o'clock most of the people have already retired. The bigger boys, now lustily singing a song, stay up latest; but soon all is quiet. On [585] moonlight nights, however, the boys and girls dance and play in the *khoro* or outside the village until a late hour. Similarly, if there is beer in the village, there will be noise well into the night and very often quarrels [786] and fights as well. When the spirit of a possessed woman comes upon her, there may be drumming and singing for her to dance to all night; then no one gets much sleep.

● 252 You yourself retire into the hut set aside for you, your mind full of the new impressions received during the day. How long you have been asleep you do not know, but suddenly you are aware of a dull, thudding noise. Can it be a drum in the distance? No. It is too regular. Again you hear thud, thud, thud. You look at the time. It is 2 a.m. You try to go to sleep; but the unknown beat is too disturbing, so you go outside to investigate. Some shadowy figures are moving at one end of the village. Women stamping! It is the women you watched in the morning, finishing the last process in their stamping. You wonder how they can see; but the night is, after all, not so dark and the meal is very white. Moreover, soon the moon will be up. The meal is stamped, then, by means of a circular movement of a flat basket, the finer grains are separated from the coarser again and again till the flour is fine enough to pass through the fine mesh of a European sieve, though in a few kraals one still finds even the last process being done by means of a basket. Later, when the sun becomes hot, the meal will be spread out to dry on mats or rocks, if any are conveniently near, or in baskets. If the women finish their stamping before dawn, they may go back to bed, as you have decided to do.

805 Such is the everyday life in a Lovedu village. There are, however, 241 important differences from one season to another, for Lovedu life is in 221 much closer harmony with nature than ours. The Native himself divides the seasons into three: *Ahilowo*, the time of hoeing, which is reckoned from about September to January; *lefuwalo*, or summer, from about February to the end of May, the time when foods are plentiful; and *mariu*, or winter, from June to the end of August. With the introduction of the plough, the planting season has been curtailed and the season of reaping prolonged. Whereas in the old days hoeing and the planting of advance crops in wet places began as early as September, to-day, even if the rains come early, nothing is done until November, more particularly because crops planted earlier are more prone to be attacked by the stalkborer. Consequently we shall consider November as the opening of the seasonal calendar. It must, however, be remembered that division of the year into seasonal activities is somewhat artificial, for activities overlap and life is never directed to one single object. Individuals often pursue their own ends, despite the general activities prevailing, and at all times there is great diversity.

241 During the ploughing and planting season, November to February, 221 there are not many people, other than children and the aged, to be found in the villages. Workers set out early to begin work in the fields, their

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Men have begun to suffer the penalty of reckless exposure to mosquitoes, especially after nightfall in the valleys where *mavala* cider was drunk. Leaky huts and damp clothes have brought coughs, rheumatism and perhaps pneumonia. There is disease even among the cattle, which are attacked by the ticks that abound in the high grass. But these things cannot outweigh the pleasures of abundant relishes and summer fruits. April (*Thudwetshi*—the month when women ask you to help them lift (*ku-vula*) the load from their heads) is indeed worthy of its name. Each afternoon the women come home with basketfuls of pumpkins, green mealies, nuts and relish. Careful housewives are drying relishes for winter while those whose weeding or mounding is up to date make tasty cakes of ground corn, monkey nuts, or the date-like fruits of the *mashhoma* tree (*Berchemia discolor*). The receptacles for storing have to be renewed for the reception of the new harvest, storage enclosures strengthened and sledges repaired. Men are to be seen daily going out to cut poles or grass, which the women carry home in enormous bundles on their heads. Soon reaping begins. The sesamum is first pulled up, then the groundnuts. Millet and kaffir corn are reaped next, lest the birds create too much havoc in the ripening fields; and, before this has ended, the mealies are garnered, stripped of their sheaths in the fields and carried home in baskets or on sledges. By the end of May, reaping and the threshing of kaffir corn and eleusine, usually done in prepared places in the fields, are in full swing. But in summer people do not, as in the planting season, work much in the mornings, except in working parties. Cooking is first finished and only after about eleven o'clock do the people go out to their fields. The men, especially those lucky enough to have no huts to renew or repair, have more leisure now, and there are daily orgies of beer-drinking. The abundance and variety of food make people forget that there might be a shortage later in the year, coming as a climax to reckless consumption and social activity. This is the time that people begin to compete in great friendly *guba*-dancing displays and carry beer to relatives-in-law. Towards the end of July, when the herdboys turn the cattle to graze on the mealie stalks, there are echoing calls of joy, for soon they will not be herding at all. Grazing near home marks the beginning of the play-housekeeping of boys and girls in the reaped fields at the end of the season.

In contrast to the planting season, when the problem is to put in one's seeds before *tsonono*, *cropping-time* allows of a variety of other activities. From May, therefore, there are not only dances and much beer-drinking, but there is time for the plying of crafts, such as pottery, mat-making, basket-making. For the specialist in any craft is always primarily an agriculturalist who plies his craft only when he has time, and it is in vain that anyone approaches even the most skilled craftsman for an object during the planting or weeding season. Once the summer rains have stopped, courtyard walls are re-plastered and hut-building is possible. The period from August to the end of October when the fields are bare and the grass has dried is *mudulakhae* ('the time of sitting at home'), three months of leisure so dear to the Lovedu. Though many people are still winding up the work of the year, building and thatching, threshing and

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IV. CO-OPERATION IN AGRICULTURE

(a) WORK-PARTY DE-COBBING MEALIES

(b) WORK-PARTY CARRYING HOME THE MEALIE CROP

[facing p. 33]

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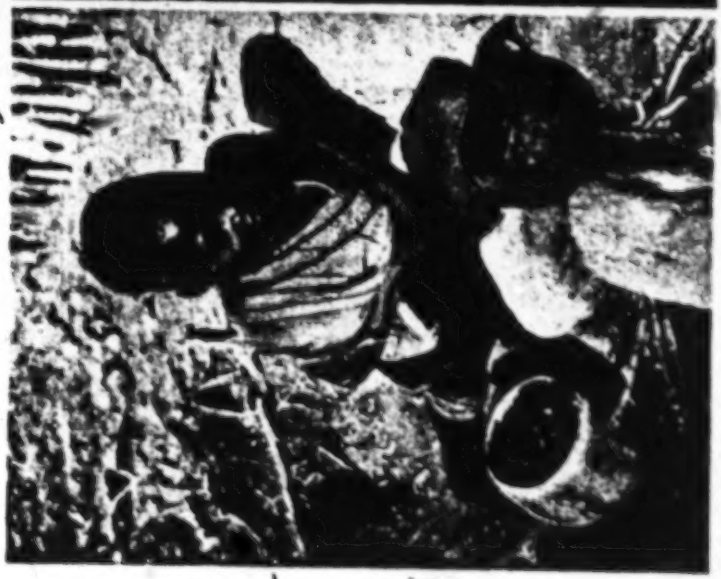

VI. HOUSEWIVES, YOUNG AND OLD
(a) THE WATCHED POT (b) WATER AND VEGETABLES FOR HER HOME

[Facing p. 97]

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261 GRATIFICATION AND CONTROL OF HUNGER--ideas about food and ingestion; eating sparingly or to excess; attitudes toward wasting food; special adjustments to hunger or famine; dieting; cultural elaboration of food appetites (*e.g.*, geophagy, gum chewing, epicures); etc. *See also:*

Famine relief 733
Religious fasting 786
Theory of digestion 827
Conception of the hunger drive 838
Food craving during pregnancy 863
Infant feeding 863
Food training of children 863

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methods of various doctors are not the same. Sometimes a goat is killed and very often one finds at the entrance to a village a stick, 3–4 ft. long, on which are the roots of a *tititwani* lily (*Hypoxis villosa*) or pieces of skin of the goat that was killed. This 'medicine of the village', some of which is always kept by the owner, is important for curing certain illnesses caused by witches and may be eaten with the firstfruits. Every year the village needs to be 'awakened' (*hu dzosa mutse*) by the renewal of these protective medicines, a process which Rapaka carries out naked at dead of night by sprinkling round the hedge certain medicine, an ingredient of which is river or sea sand. The river sand has the property of making the village appear as an expanse of water before the eyes of the sorcerer, who thereupon concludes that he has come to the wrong place. A village may have no visible hedge, but the invisible, charmed enclosure is never absent.

On passing through the gate you find yourself in the *khɔrɔ*, an open space, in which there is a hearth. Hardly have you seated yourself on one of the sprawling, spider-like stools of forked branches that are ranged around it than Raselaka himself, who has been expecting you, comes forward. He sits down and, inclining his body to the left, claps his hands, saying, '*Ndau dona*' ('Male lion'). He asks after your health, politely inquires about the journey, and pleasantries are exchanged. According to strict etiquette, he ought to have taken his visitors straight to the chief hut, where guests are received, but he knows you wish to be shown over the village, and perhaps that is why he lingers with you in the *khɔrɔ*. A woman passes, bends both knees in a curtsy and inclines the head, passing one palm slowly over the other, a manner of greeting usual to women; then goes slowly on her way. Soon afterwards, you are overpowered by a most offensive smell. You turn round and discover that she has opened up a grain pit, from the roomy interior of which a small boy, who has let himself in through the narrow neck, is handing out dishfuls of brownish-coloured mealies. Dampness has entered and spoilt the mealies, but the process has not gone far enough to make them uneatable. They are called *madumi* and, though the smell may be unpleasant, there are many who, at least as a change of diet, prefer food made of them to that of ordinary mealies. Many people are already inquiring whether the owner is willing to exchange them. Dotted about the *khɔrɔ* are other pits which can be located by means of a stick, for each is covered with a large, flat stone sealed down with mud. The *khɔrɔ* is the place where the men and boys of the village sit, and where cases may be heard; but it is also the playground of the children. Often when children worry their mothers by shouting or playing in the courtyards, they are told, 'Run away and play in the *khɔrɔ*; this is not your playground.' Many villages to-day have no *khɔrɔ*; they are too small to need one or, where there is a much-neglected space for it, it is not used at all, especially when the men are away at work in town.

To the left of the *khɔrɔ* are a small cattle kraal with wire fence, an enclosure for goats, and another with a roof for donkeys. Only a few villages have cattle at all; but, for most of those that have, a kraal outside the village made of rough poles serves now that there is no longer any

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241 (*Phaseolus aureus*). Several varieties of sugar-cane (sweet sorghums) are planted on the boundaries of fields or between the other crops.

Njugo beans are ancient groundnuts which require a good deal of attention by way of mounding, restrictive taboos and careful pulling up, although they are very welcome as a change of diet. In this respect they [177] resemble peanuts, which were popularized by the Shangana-Tonga not so long ago. These nuts sometimes answer well where other crops have failed; in certain years they may flourish while the cereals wither in the sun. Then you may hear people say, but it is only by way of joking among the Lovedu, that the Shangana-Tonga witches have called the cereals to undergo circumcision (*ku tha*). Some people in the valleys are half-inclined to believe the claims that the Shangana-Tonga make for their witches, because it is undoubtedly uncanny that, when the nuts succeed the cereals fail, and vice versa. But usually the claim is ascribed to the desire of these outcast people to assert their importance—the Lovedu know nothing of inferiority complexes, but they are shrewd judges of human nature.

Sesamum used to be popular in the valleys and is said to be an old crop of the Roka. But peanuts have ousted this wholesome, albeit very troublesome, crop. You will be told that the reason lies in the growing laziness of people; this is a reason given for the neglect of many other old crops, but in truth we have here merely a shift in the application of the available resources. A delightful commentary on some of the values of the society, though we must warn the reader not to judge them from our standpoint, is the name *lewonyo-modimo*, 'sesamum of the gods'. It is [182] a wild variety, unsuitable for human consumption, but good enough for the gods. It is not given to the gods, yet it reminds one of the sprouted eleusine merely mixed with water that is offered to the gods with the words, 'This is not water. Truly it is beer.'

● 261 There are other crops and the variety furnishes a well-balanced diet. But that is not considered to be the virtue of variety. A food is good if it fills. That is why they prefer their hard cakes of porridge to our watery oatmeal. They are inured to that feeling of fullness since the day of their birth, when Grandmother *rammed porridge* down their throats. But there is comfortable fullness and uncomfortable fullness—that after a good porridge meal and that after eating too much *njugo* bean. The stomach is not insensible to certain distinctions, though they are not our distinctions. Filling is not the only virtue of a food. Some foods relieve the monotony of the round of porridge and blackjacks, and some are [146] tasty titbits or rare delicacies. But no one thinks of the virtues of a balanced diet, for nutritive and protective qualities of foods are not recognized. The old diet, simple though it might be from our point of view, was sufficiently varied to maintain people in good health; but it is not realized that, precisely because it was so simple, even a small change might eliminate essential ingredients. That change has not yet come among the Lovedu, but it is near at hand. Subsidiary crops are becoming less popular. You still see cowpeas, mung beans, water melons, even horse, sweet potatoes, and native beans. Yet, on the whole, what is most impressive is the growing reliance upon cereals and pumpkins, and the

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643 and of important councillors who are her closest relatives: when a chief
789 dies the body is left for some days in the hut, so that, when it is rubbed in a certain way (*hu fɔrɔlwa*), the skin easily comes away. Other ingredients are fat of the scaly ant-eater (*khwara*), a royal animal which, when found, has always to be brought alive to the royal village, and parts of the kudu (*thɔlɔ*). The queen's rain-doctor told us that essential ingredients were sea-water, because it foams and froths (*hu pukula*), feathers of the lightning bird, white and black sea shells, and various roots and
[824] barks, chief among which is the stem of the *khadi* (*Adenia gummifera*), a tough forest creeper that contains much water. *Khadi* stems are also used for sprinkling 'cooling' medicines and for tying the bodies of dead people. Whether the queen uses these ingredients, we cannot say. From time to time a black sheep is killed to give strength to the queen's rain medicines; it has to be washed with water which is afterwards poured into the rain pots, but it is said that such a sheep is merely a present-day substitute for a
[634] human being, usually a child, whose brains were used. Important district heads related to the chief also have their rain-pots. Every year in about August, at the command of the queen, such a district head collects certain roots and barks, knowledge of which he has received from his father, places them in his rain-pot, mixed with water that has been drawn by girls below the age of puberty, and stirs them up so that rain may be good that year. Rain-pots are great secrets and only after years of friendship were we privileged to see one: it was well hidden in the cleft of a rock and partly buried at the foot of a tree on the upper slopes of a hill where the owner's father had dwelt. The rain-pots of the queen we have not seen, and what regular measures she takes are not known for certain; but, since it is said, when there are good rains, that the queen has firmly laid the foundations (*hu thea*) of the year, it is not unlikely that she also stirs her medicines.

789 Great care has to be taken lest the rain-pots 'weaken' (*hu figthɔla*).
261 They have to be given (*hu lumiswa*, to cause to be bitten) the first green foods (*mutshatsha*) every year, kaffir water melon (*legwadzi*) mixed with other green foods being used for the purpose, and at the royal village no one cooks and eats the new summer relishes before this has been done. On this day possessed people or people who have epilepsy also eat medicine with the firstfruits, but ordinary people do not *luma*, and there are none of the public festivities of a semi-military character associated with the eating of the firstfruits among Swazi and Zulu. It is very important too that the first termites (*dimpɔpɔ*), which appear usually in December, just after the first good rains, should be given to the rain-pots. Termites are closely associated with rain: they always fly out of their nests just after the rain; in a dry year there are very few; and it is believed that sprinkling the antheap with rain medicine (*mufugo*) makes the ants come in great numbers. Termites for the rain-pots may not be gathered by married women or girls over the age of puberty, and in 1937, when some young girls carried the first termites to the queen, she gave the termites to the dogs, refusing to use ants that had been thus defiled. The giving of the first termites to the rain-pots is called *bulome*. An interesting case arose out of this practice in January, 1938, when certain people in Duthudi

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area ate termites before the *bulane* of the head. An inquiry was held by the district head and four men were fined two goats each. They were told that, if their case had come before the queen herself, they would have had to pay a head of cattle. Only the few sub-areas under the immediate jurisdiction of the queen herself send termites to the queen; in other areas they send to their own head, and there is no rule that the queen's own rain-charms should be given before others.

The powers of the queen to make rain are not absolute. The queen can control rain only 'in agreement with her ancestors' who are able, if they wish, to stay her hand just as she herself is able to stay the hands of rain-doctors. There are also certain things that, by causing the rain charms to become 'weak' (*figthcla*), have power to stop the rain unless proper measures are taken. It has already been shown how heat is associated with illness and things being wrong. If a person has been burned to death or struck by lightning, he must be buried in a wet place near the river or his grave 'cooled' with special medicine obtained from the chief, lest drought ensues. Similarly, abortions or miscarriages, women dying in pregnancy or childbirth, twins killed at birth, babies dying before cutting their teeth or cutting the upper teeth before the lower, initiates dying in the circumcision lodge—all must be buried in a wet place.

Since an electrical storm often means little or no rain, it is believed that 'sending' lightning to kill one's enemies, a common practice of witches, spoils the country by preventing rain. Hence at a tribal gathering (*khivijo*), held in the spring of 1937–8, the people were told among other things that the chief does not want to see 'lightning of people' (as opposed to natural lightning); any district head hearing of anything like this among his people was to report at once to the queen. A common phenomenon in time of drought is the banking up of heavy rain clouds with all the promise of a soaking rain, only to be dispersed by wind. Anything associated with winds is thus thought to prevent rain. That is why witches, *by hanging lefalaja-maru—literally, 'disperser of the clouds'* (*Asparagus plumosis*)—or an ordinary broom on a branch where it will sway in the air, can disperse the clouds; and any one dying of a coughing disease, such as *dzve* or consumption, must be buried in wet soil or soil that has been sprinkled with *mafugo* medicine. If abortions or people dying of a coughing disease are buried without these precautions, the grave is called *pukudi* (from *ku pukula*, which perhaps is the opposite of *ku fuga*, to blow upon by a cool breeze, to sprinkle with cooling medicine). *Pukudi* contains the conception of wind issuing upwards or hot air quivering above a heated surface. As soon as the vapour-laden air reaches the grave, it stops or dissolves in the wind and it is even believed that the corpse, thrusting up an arm, waves it about to cause the wind that drives away the rain.

How dangerous wind is considered to be in setting at naught the efforts of the queen was well illustrated on November 15th, 1937. On that day, after propitious black clouds had been dispersed by a gale that lifted the thatch off many a hut, it was proclaimed that the following day had to be a holiday. People said, '*Gi khumula*' (it is a 'turning back' before the goal